I REMEMBER –

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It is difficult to write about Misha. He was very reserved, showing restrain, I think, not only to me, as his polite detachment was coming the first and perfectly kept a distance.

Many not only respected, but honored him, and this was as much a part of his personality as tolerance was a part of his behavior. Young physicists adored him and would willingly give up a lot to get his friendship, which actually was not so available. Not because he refused it, he was just a loner, an outsider by nature. Additionally he volonteerly cut himself off from the Russian community of physicists, by his own choice to be a Jewish outsider.

He always proclaimed that his being Jewish as the prime of his life, while for others it was pretty much secondary. I did not know anybody, besides his family, who shared this attitude with him. He succeeded in that people respected his beliefs, which I think did not only involve religion; it probably did not even imply religion. I am not sure, his world of ideas was pretty much locked, yet he was always open to those who were seriously interested, and generously shared his views, both scientific and philosophic. A natural mentor, he was never pushy. His confidence was powerful, but quiet.

His appearance (nothing superfluous – slim, even fragile, with beautiful shiny eyes, overall very Semitic) was somehow very different. Nothing was extra, being extremely talented and brilliant, he always softened his glamour with a very quiet voice, and with a very concerned manner. Some sort of intellectual aura always surrounded him. He was always so interesting to speak with, although I cannot say comforting. Soft manners did not help, as he was not an easy going person. He was very uncompromising yet surprisingly tolerant simultaneously. Never showing off and absolutely no pontification, just simple, with the special, I would say, refined simplicity that is granted to those who are gifted with talents and pretty much aware of the fact.

Actually I do not know whether or not we were friends, but we definitely were on very friendly terms. He was too distant, I would say too perfect and that usually prevents a certain closeness of friendship. This profound respect creates some kind of a threshold, which I suspect nobody crossed, with the exception of his family. At home he was different. His beautiful and bright wife Lilia, a charmer, quite open and incredibly pleasant, was able to create a real home, cozy for everybody, and at home he was a very warm family man.

I just loved to visit them. It looked, at least for me, that the actual head of the family was Lilia, but Misha was a real provider, a real husband and father, as it should be. He always was as he should be, in everything. Always at the highest level.

You can have different feelings for Misha and for the world of his ideas, but the fact that he seriously influenced quite a generation of young theoreticians scientifically and personally, is evident. For his sharpness and critical mind deliciously flavored with a trace of irony, deep encyclopedic knowledge and spotless decency, nobility and devotion was an obligation. A man of duty, you could rely on him absolutely. His individuality did not accept compromises and did not correspond to trivial explanations. But who said that everything should be explained. It was not a simple life of a simple person. Let us have respect without explanation, does he not deserve it?

At the end of this note I would like to wish all the best of the best to his family: to Lilia and their so beloved girls, to his mother, and to his sister Ina and her family. Probably it is not proper, but I am sure, he would appreciate that.

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In spring the noise of rooks is there,
And watercolor in the skies
With snow washed up in the air,
And poplar branches straight and bare
Are shooting fog with shades and lights.

> This park remembers You by heart –
> Your name and etching of Your steps.
> The oozy pond – the aging guard
> Keeps Your reflection and Your dart
> With tender holding them in depth.

The January came with frosts,
Ice crusted clouds set on fire –
Stained glass is steaming seized by force
That even stainless steel dissolves
With salty tears wept by wire.

> The winter Moscow is mute,
> The icon tin is hugged by copper,
> While bells of Byzantine en route
> Play bloody victory and cruelly intrude
> Upon the gods who died in icy chapel.

As always, fights – remorse and sin,
In coexistence – pride for the ejected
The east is east, and west is west,
What to expect from shiny tin –
When coin is tossed, just nothing is selected.

To kneel and kick – and vacuum is filled
Meanwhile the golden coin is changed for nothing.
Meanwhile the emptiness is blowing in the wind
Meanwhile the silence locked in draughting field,
Is screaming painfully, in Hebrew and in Russian.

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The end of Moscow, the sleepy outskirts,
The basket with leftovers of stale imagination,
The grassy gravel whispering no words,
The strand of no regrets, no trace of agitation.

The bells of leaving trains, the path of turning rails,
The past with no returns along the linden trees on pavement –
Rebelling memory that always fails and painfully inhales
The poison remedy with half-forgotten flavor.

And blow of the winds on sterling steel of skates,
In light of candle fuming through a glass in frosty smoke
Turns single glance into the sparkling blade
And mingles nights and days and mates insomnia with glow.
As snow, snow-white blinds vision off the eyes
We burn the dreams with tears of nightmare
And lick the bitterness of scrambling lives
In silent fare well in breathless dreadful air.